Reviewer's report

**Title:** Tracheostomy in septic and non-septic patients can be performed without bleeding complications in case of normal thromboelastometry results (EXTEM CT) despite increased PT-INR: a prospective pilot study

**Version:** 4  
**Date:** 23 December 2014

**Reviewer:** Walter Kahr

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

As per my previous comment: "There is no mention of PTT and other standard blood clotting parameters such as platelet counts that clearly influence bleeding". Although platelet counts are now provided, the individual PTTs are not. Sepsis leading to bleeding is due to a consumption of clotting factors - particularly fibrinogen, factor V and factor VIII, and increased fibrin degradation products (all not measured). The cumulative effect is to prolong PTT. Since according to the authors PTT was normal for all (Methods page 4), I am not convinced that sepsis has anything to do with the prolongation of the INR (for the cases with INR > 1.3) - which could be due to Vit K insufficiency and/or liver problems. Furthermore inclusion of the INTEM would be indicative of the contact pathway of coagulation - readily affected by consumptive coagulopathy during sepsis with factor depletion. Showing the INTEM values would be more convincing to this reviewer. This is further evident since the EXTEM CT values in sepsis and non-sepsis are not significantly different and fall well within the normal range of 38-79 sec. Therefore the INTEM values would have been informative. I would not base any clinical decisions on only EXTEM parameters in the absence of a PTT and INTEM using the ROTEM. If any patient was on heparin I would have compared the INTEM with the HEPTEM. From the results provided it is unclear who exactly received the 4 units of FFP - what were their exact coagulation parameters.

The Figures do not make sense you cannot have values INR 1.2-1.3 in one category and in another INR # 1.3 as in Figure 1 and in other Figures. Where would an INR value of exactly 1.3 go?

**Minor Essential Revisions**

There are spelling mistakes throughout the manuscript that need to be corrected.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests